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Organization: Salado SWCD

Title:

Comments: The following text was extracted from a scan of the original hard copy letter using Optical Character Recognition and pasted into this text box by Forest Service personnel. See attached scan (PDF) of original hard copy letter.

SALADO SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Chairman- Sam Olney

Vice Chairman- Jacky Bruton

Sec./Treas.- John Hand

Member- Russell Walraven

Member- Jerry McPhaul

Forest Planner

Cibola National Forest and National Grasslands

2113 Osuna Rd. NE

Albuquerque, NM 87113

9-22-15

Dear Sir,

The Salado Soil and Water Conservation District does not support wilderness of any kind on the Cibola National Forest.

The West is burning up and in a severe drought, proposing more area with restricted access is moving in the wrong direction. Wilderness will only hamper efforts to prevent catastrophic wildfire in these areas. The cost of fighting these wildfires is not only monetary but is costing lives as well. The Cibola Forest needs to be more concerned with a healthy forest than a restricted forest.

Salado SWCD supports multi use in the Cibola Nation Forest. With cattle grazing being a huge historic tradition in our district, wilderness will only make it more difficult and costly for this way of life to continue on forest allotments. Ranchers must have access to their cattle and all infrastructure to maintain those cattle. Limiting motorized vehicles makes the everyday ranch work much more costly and in some cases impossible. Agriculture and hunting are the major industries in Catron County therefore this wilderness proposal will be very detrimental everyone in this county.

How do you plan on managing all these acres of wilderness? How do you propose to keep people from driving on existing roads? What is it going to cost to keep it "untrammelled by man"? Most of the acres proposed have existing roads and infrastructure already in place.

The inventoried wilderness in the Magdalena Ranger District takes up 293,474 acres, most of which is in the Salado SWCD. This will greatly affect our efforts to improve watershed health in our district.

Thank you,

Sam Olney, Chair

Salado SWCD